Indiana State Department of Agriculture

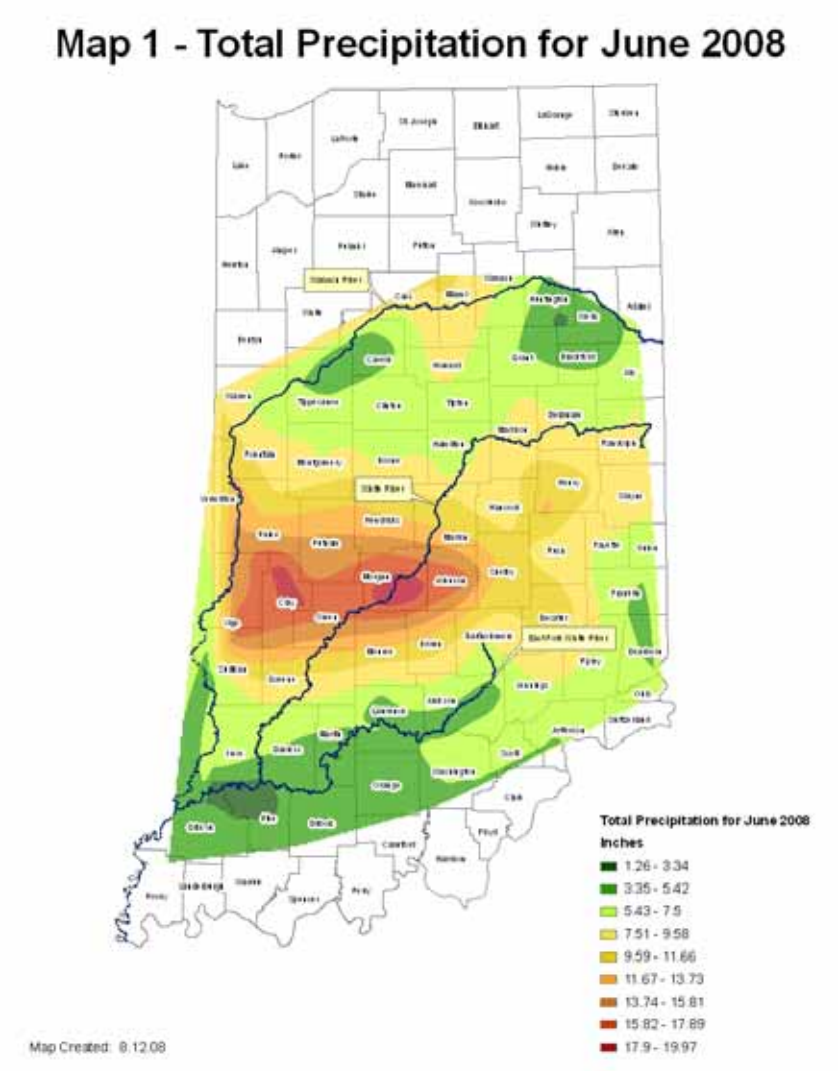
Division of Soil Conservation

2008 Disaster Recovery Assessment for Agricultural Lands

Beginning on June 7, 2008, and continuing today, the Division of Soil Conservation (DSC) has been investing staff and resources in the urgent need for flood recovery and land repairs on Indiana's most productive asset, farmland. The monthly rainfall map below shows the total rainfall that took place in June, thus foreshadowing the consequences now being seen. (Map 1) To enhance planning and to quantify the extent of the disaster, the DSC began performing assessments that ranged from county by county broad public evaluations to in-the-field individual evaluations by farm. In all, nearly 300 individual farms have received preliminary on-site evaluations. Additionally, as the flood waters receded and more definitive assessments could be made, each local SWCD was asked to evaluate financial needs for their counties through the Emergency Conservation Assistance Program (ECAP). This enhanced the prioritization of counties by severity and volume of impact.

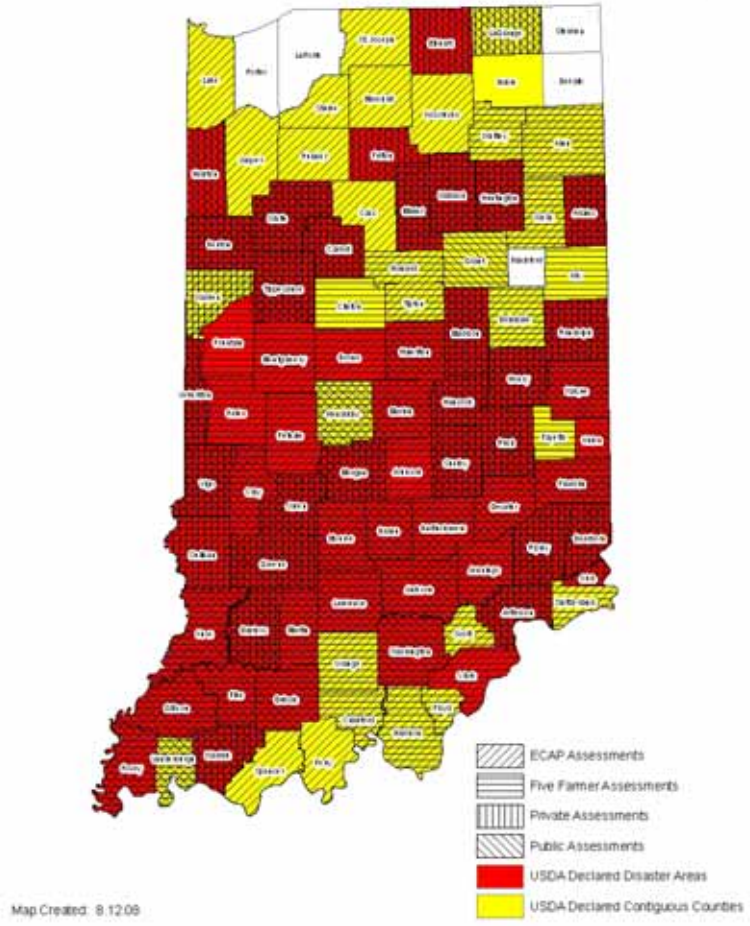
With all the evaluations being considered, 35 counties were surfaced as the most severally affected. Whether from an entire county receiving major rainfall and flooding or from a few farmers seeing severe damages, these counties seem to represent the hardest hit of the 72 counties that are currently eligible for federal disaster programs.

The following maps and charts were compiled to present the data collected and the information gathered. This information may be used to allocate recovery resources, such as technical assistance, and recovery programs and funding, be it federal, state or local. The assessments offer a broad estimate of potential acres impacted which is more than 1.4 M. The information does allow DSC to prioritize counties as hardest hit and therefore possibly most deserving of the limited resources as they become available.



All emergency counties received the scrutiny of the various assessments. Technical staff, local officials and farmers directly impacted were utilized throughout this process. Individual assessments will continue until the need is exhausted and data will continue to be gathered for evaluation and historical documentation. There were 4 types of assessment models used. (Refer to Chart 1 for assessments and timelines.) Refer to "Damage Assessment Summary" (Map 2) to review the counties and the assessments performed.

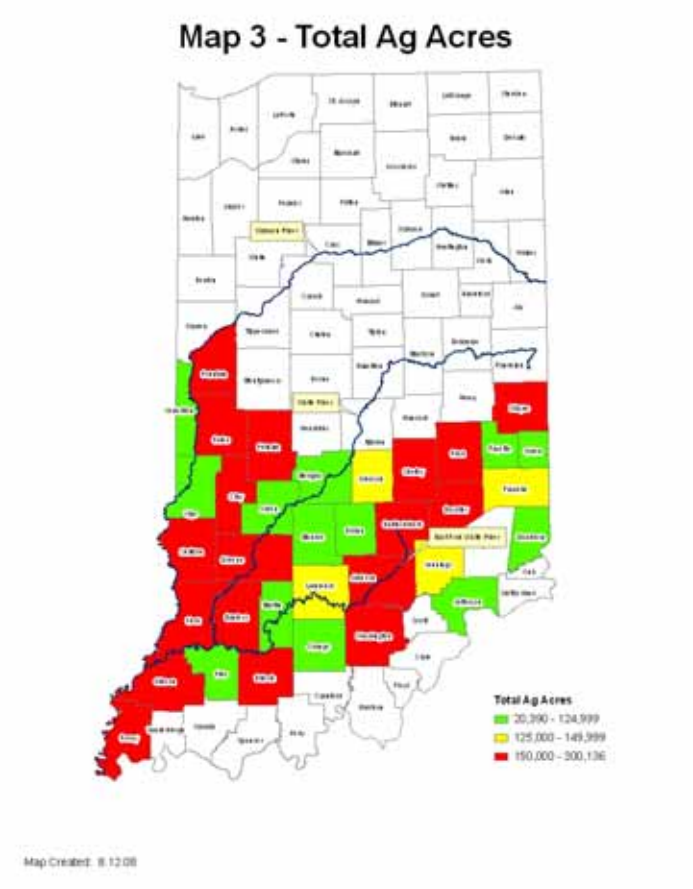
Map 2 - Damage Assessment Summary



To support the assessments and to begin quantify the amount of damage, projected workload and resource needs, DSC considered agricultural acreage numbers and floodplain acreage data to compile a disaster acreage estimate. Refer to "Total Floodplain Acres" (Map 2) to see the number of acres of floodplain that exists in each of the affected counties as well as showing the flood plain locations. An assumption was made for the purpose of predicting the acreage of flooding impact in a county. The assumption is that if any acres in a county are flooded it would be mostly likely that the floodplains would be most impacted.

Chart 1: Damage Assessment Timeline

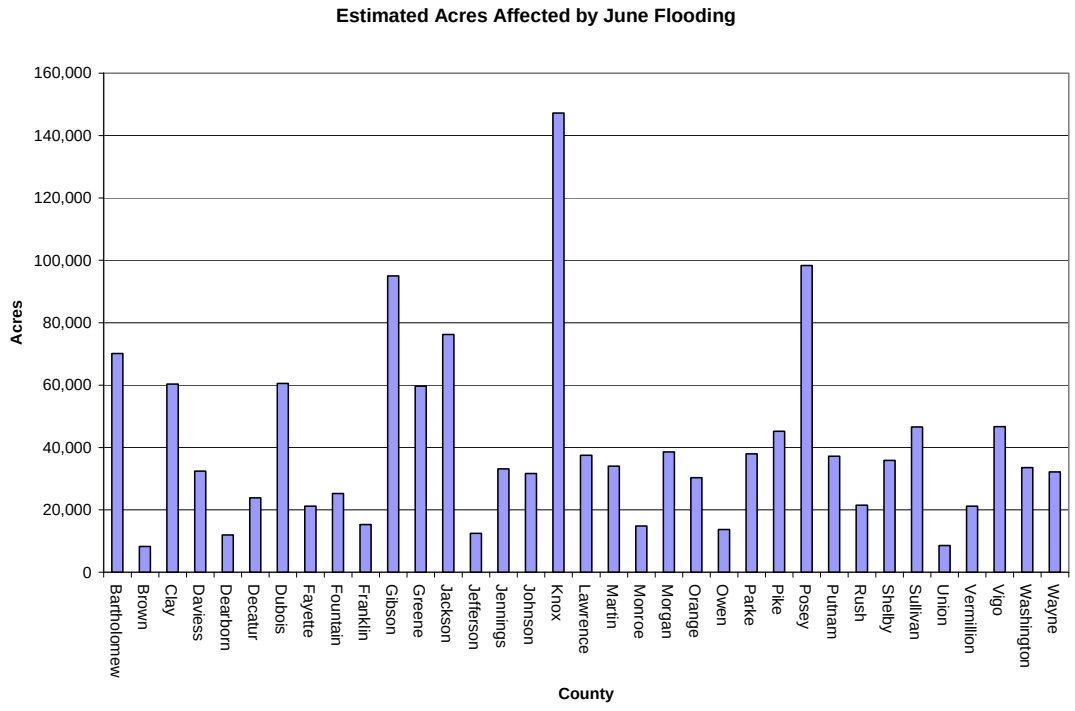
1	*Private Assessments and Assistance (landowners/producers)*	*June 9 – ongoing*
2	*Public Assessments and Assistance (county entities, Cooperative Extension Service, ect.)*	*June 9 - ongoing*
3	*Five Farmer Assessments (determine widespread extent of damage in disaster counties)*	*July 2 – July 9*
4	*Emergency Conservation Assessment Program*	*July 8 – August 1*



Refer to "Total Ag Acres" (Map 3) for the number of agricultural acres by county and the main river tributaries of the Wabash and White River. The ag acres, floodplain acres and percentage of flood plain acres that are used for agricultural production was used to prioritize and rank the counties as having the most potential for damage with confirmation of damage and need coming from the local individual farm visits and the SWCD countywide assessments.

"Estimated Acres Affected by June Flooding" (Chart 2) depicts the county's potential total acres impacted.

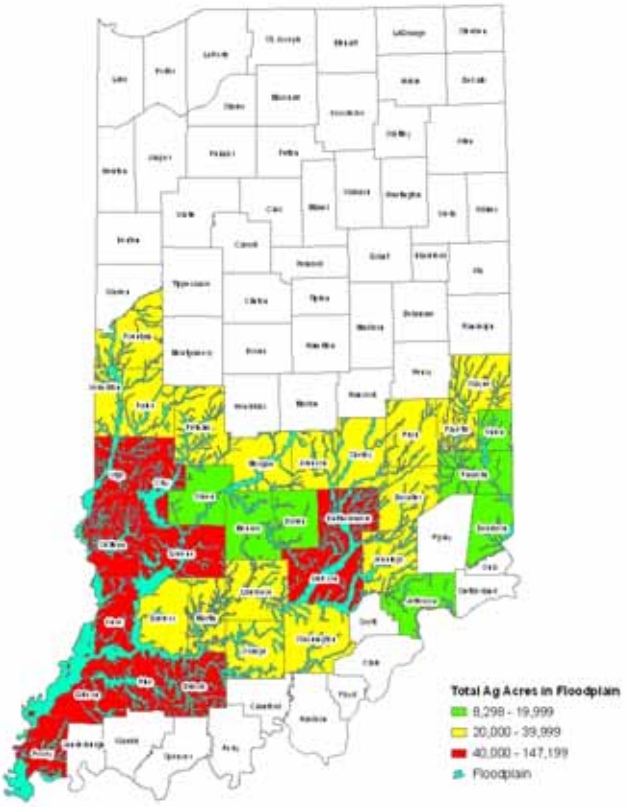
Chart 2



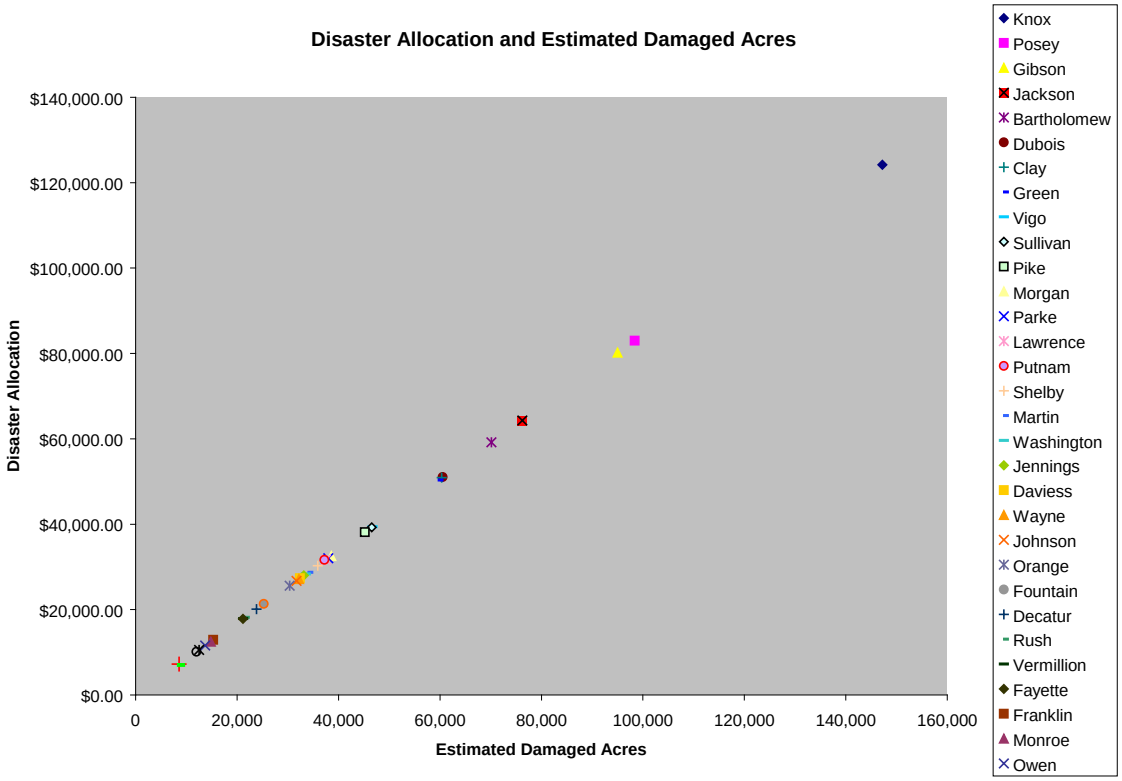
"Total Ag Acres in Floodplain" (Map 4) shows the ag acres in the floodplain and prioritizes the counties by severity of flooding and rainfall impact.

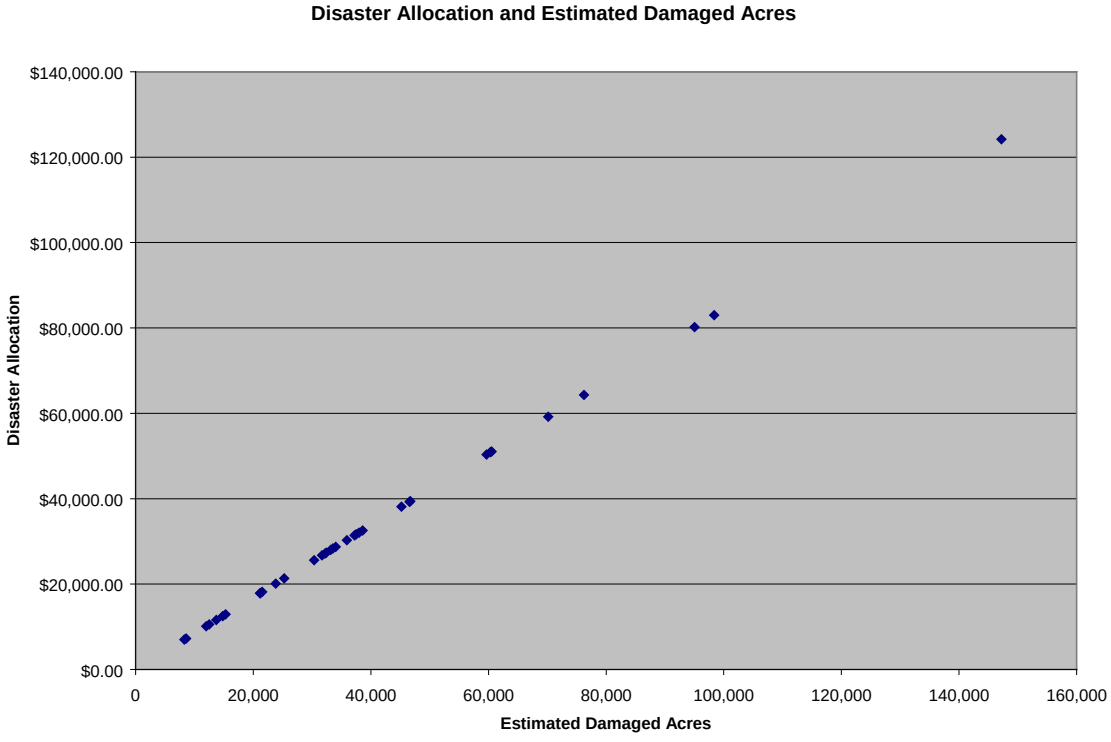
Across all 35 counties the potential acres could be as much as 1.4 M acres in need of repairs. As SWCDs surveyed their counties and farmers they estimated that 60% of those acres would need significant land grading and reshaping as well as sediment and debris removed. Long term challenges will exist with soil fertility and rebuilding organic matter. Fortunately, many federal programs may offer financial support in long term contracts and cost share to relieve some of the financial costs. Public resources (federal, state and local) and private resources such as technical and consulting assistance will be crucial for farmers to access these programs and support. The program dollars available could number in the millions across the state if farmers work to take advantage of these opportunities.

Map 4 - Total Ag Acres In Floodplain



Map Created: 8.12.08


Disaster Allocation and Estimated Damaged Acres
$140,000.00
$120,000.00
$100,000.00
$80,000.00
$60,000.00
$40,000.00
$20,000.00
$0.00
Disaster Allocation
0
20,000
40,000
60,000
80,000
100,000
120,000
140,000
160,000
Estimated Damaged Acres
Knox
Posey
Gibson
Jackson
Bartholomew
Dubois
Clay
Green
Vigo
Sullivan
Pike
Morgan
Parke
Lawrence
Putnam
Shelby
Martin
Washington
Jennings
Daviess
Wayne
Johnson
Orange
Fountain
Decatur
Rush
Vermillion
Fayette
Franklin
Monroe
Owen


Disaster Allocation and Estimated Damaged Acres
$140,000.00
$120,000.00
$100,000.00
$80,000.00
$60,000.00
$40,000.00
$20,000.00
$0.00
Disaster Allocation
0
20,000
40,000
60,000
80,000
100,000
120,000
140,000
160,000
Estimated Damaged Acres